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Response of artificial human skin to irritants:  
cytokine and prostaglandin release

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ABSTRACT

Cytokines have been implicated in aspects of vesicant injury/repair. This study describes responses of artificial human skin (Skin<sup>2</sup> and EpiDerm) to chloroethyl ethyl sulfide (CEES), defined by interleukin-1 $\alpha$  (IL-1 $\alpha$ ), tumor necrosis factor- $\alpha$  (TNF- $\alpha$ ) and prostaglandin E<sub>2</sub> (PGE<sub>2</sub>) release. Skin<sup>2</sup> and EpiDerm in Millicells of 6 well Costar trays containing 1ml of assay media/well were exposed to CEES (2.0mg/L, flow rate 1L/min for 2hr) in humidified air. Control tissues were exposed without CEES. Millicells containing Skin<sup>2</sup> or EpiDerm (12/group) were transferred to fresh assay media and incubated for 22 hr. Tissues (6/group) were used for MTT tests. Media from each well were stored in liquid N<sub>2</sub>. IL-1 $\alpha$  (RIA or ELISA), PGE<sub>2</sub> (RIA or EIA), and TNF- $\alpha$  (EIA) were measured in thawed specimens. CEES significantly increased release of IL-1 $\alpha$  (192pg/ml  $\pm$  34.9, control 55pg/ml  $\pm$  16.6) and PGE<sub>2</sub> (3,977pg/0.1ml  $\pm$  1,197, control 2,541pg/0.1ml  $\pm$  570) from Skin<sup>2</sup>, but not TNF- $\alpha$  levels, with viability (MTT) 3%. Neither IL-1 $\alpha$  nor TNF- $\alpha$  were elevated by CEES-exposed EpiDerm, although PGE<sub>2</sub> was elevated (258pg/0.1ml  $\pm$  71 vs 184  $\pm$  79), viability 46%. We conclude pro-inflammatory mediators, IL-1 $\alpha$  and PGE<sub>2</sub>, could play significant roles in CEES injury and that either fibroblasts are critical to the process, or EpiDerm, which lacks fibroblasts, is somehow more resistant.

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